

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 and 8-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by Applicants' Admitted Prior Art. In response, Applicants amended claims 1 and 9 to further clarify that the specific region is a predetermined region, and respectfully traverse.

The Examiner states in the Office Action (Paper No. 6) that Applicants' Admitted Prior Art teaches a loading operation and an unloading operation occurring between a disk 111 and a ramp 116, and that the ramp 116 extends for an angular range smaller than 360° (Page 3, lines 6-13 and FIG. 1B). However, FIG. 3 of the present Application is also applicable to Applicants' Admitted Prior Art since it discusses the conventional disk unit 10 of FIG. 1B. With respect to the disk unit of FIGs. 1 and 3, a ramp load operation is carried out immediately and the region where loading occurs is not predetermined when a ramp load command from a hard disk controller is recognized. Similarly, a ramp unload operation is carried out immediately when a ramp unload command from the hard disk controller is recognized. Accordingly, a position where the head is loaded or unloaded between the disk and the ramp mechanism is not specified or predetermined (Page 3, line 14-23). Consequently, as illustrated in FIG. 3, a data recording prohibit region Ad encompasses a 360° region in which data recording is prohibited. Applicants' Admitted Prior Art does not disclose or suggest a predetermined specific region where data recording is prohibited that extends for an angular range that is less than 360°.

In contrast, claims 1 and 9 are amended to clarify that the specific region is a predetermined region that extends through an angular range smaller than 360°. In this manner, the loading and unloading operations between the disk and the ramp are limited to the predetermined specific region that extends through the smaller angular range. Since Applicants' Admitted Prior Art does not disclose or suggest a predetermined specific region, withdrawal of the §102 rejection of amended claims 1 and 9 is respectfully requested.

Claims 2-6 and 8 are dependent either directly or indirectly from claim 1, and are considered allowable for the reasons recited above with respect to the rejection of amended claim 1.

New claim 15 has the specific region of claim 1 defined by a detection signal output from a detection circuit. New claim 16 further defines the specific region of claim 15 as having a ramp load position S_s corresponding to a timing when the detection signal from the detection circuit transitions from a first level to a second level. Since a detection signal that defines the specific region is not believed to be disclosed or suggested by the cited art of record, Applicants earnestly solicit allowance of new claims 15-16.

For all of the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that this Application is in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney if an interview would expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

GREER, BURNS & CRAIN, LTD.

By 
Joseph P. Fox
Registration No. 41,760

July 23, 2004

300 South Wacker Drive - Suite 2500
Chicago, Illinois 60606
Telephone: (312) 360-0080
Facsimile: (312) 360-9315
Customer Number 24978